

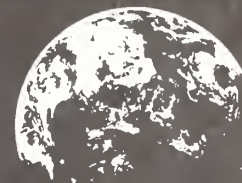
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Farm Broadcasters Letter



Letter No. 2257

CURRENT SPECIAL RECORDS

April 10, 1986

AG EXPORTS
DOWN
\$3.2 BILLION

The U.S. Department of Agriculture reports that during Oct. 1985, to Feb. 1986, U.S. agricultural exports totaled \$12.8 billion, down \$3.2 billion, or 20 pct., from the same period a year earlier. The export volume during the first five months of fiscal 1986 totaled 55.1 million tons, off approximately 16 pct. from the 65.8 million tons exported during the first five months of fiscal 1985. Experiencing the sharpest declines thus far are wheat, corn, rice, grain sorghum, cotton, soybean oil and sunflowerseed.

U.S. AG IMPORTS
UP 6 PCT.

U.S. agricultural imports during Oct.-Feb. 1986 reached \$8 billion, 600 million up about 6 pct. from the \$8 billion, 200 million imported during the same period of fiscal 1985, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The imports included products such as wheat and wheat products, barley and malt and other coarse grains, coconut oil, vegetable oils, cigarette leaf, cigar leaf, feathers and down, and cotton, linters and silk.

DOWNTURN
IN LAND
VALUES

The values of U.S. farmland declined again last year, continuing the downward trend that began in 1981, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. As of Feb. 1, U.S. farmland averaged \$596 an acre, down from \$679 last year and a peak of \$823 in the early 1980's. Values rose substantially in New England and New Jersey, while Delaware, New York, Virginia and Tennessee recorded smaller gains. Values fell in all other states, with 25 states incurring declines of 10 pct. or more. Values fell by more than half since 1981 in Nebraska, Minnesota and Iowa.

CREDIT TO
MEXICO FOR
LIVESTOCK

Sec'y of Agriculture Richard Lyng authorized \$50 million in additional credit guarantees to U.S. exporters so Mexico can purchase U.S. breeding livestock under the Commodity Credit Corporation Credit Guarantee program in fiscal 1986. Lyng also announced an offer of dairy cattle to Indonesia under the USDA's Export Enhancement Program. Lyng said, "These two actions help USDA intensively pursue its red-meat purchasing policy to offset the market impact of increased slaughter of cattle under the dairy whole-herd buyout program."

SYRIA ELIGIBLE
FOR ENHANCEMENT
PROGRAM

Sec'y of Agriculture Richard Lyng announced that an offer for wheat to Syria is the latest initiative under the USDA's Export Enhancement. Lyng said the initiative will give U.S. exporters the opportunity to sell up to 700,000 tons of wheat. (For more information, call William Randolph, 202-382-9254 or Larry McElvain, 202-447-6225.)

HALF A TRILLION IN FOOD MARKETING

Sales in the U.S. food marketing system reached an estimated half a trillion dollars in 1985, a 3.5-pct. real increase in sales above 1984, compared with the 2.2-pct. real increase in gross national product, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The food marketing system comprised over 1 million firms in 1985 in food manufacturing, wholesaling, retailing, and service. Because the food marketing system benefits from low-inflation economy, which allows costs to be held down, 1985 was a stable year as farm prices fell and wages and marketing costs increased moderately. (For more information, call Tony Gallo, 202-786-1866.)

AG EXPORTS DURING FEB.

Agricultural exports during Feb. 1986 totaled \$2 billion, 450 million, down \$479 million, or 16 pct. from Feb. 1985, and 4 pct. below the \$2 billion, 540 million exported during the previous month, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Export volume for Feb. 1986 totaled just over 10 million tons, down roughly 13 pct. from the 11.6 million tons exported during Feb. 1985, and 1.1 million tons below the previous month.

35 YEARS OF FARM VALUES

The land and buildings of the average U.S. farm were worth about \$13,700 in 1950, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The average value per acre was \$65. Both figures climbed steadily until reaching peak values of \$352,000 per farm and \$823 per acre in 1982. Farm real estate debt increased from \$5 billion, 600 million to more than \$111 billion between 1950 and 1984. In 1950, farmers owed only 7 pct. of the value of their real estate to creditors. By 1984, the national average was 14 pct., and it was higher in some states. In Iowa, for example, the debt's share of farm real estate values climbed from 7.7 pct. in 1950 to 11.2 pct. in 1981, and 17.7 pct. in 1984.

SPEEDING UP LOAN MAKING

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farmers Home Administration is hiring more than 1,000 temporary employees in 42 states to help process farm loan applications. The additional personnel is being assigned to those FmHA offices where the work load is greatest. The employees include both loan specialists and clerical personnel. According to FmHA administrator Vance Clark, "We need to be sure that needed farm credit--whether in the form of direct loans or FmHA-guaranteed commercial loans--reaches farmers in time for the planting season."

AFRICAN SWINE FEVER IN NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands has been added to the list of countries infected with African swine fever. This restricts the importation of pork and pork products from that country to the U.S., according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This is in addition to import restrictions already in place on pork products from The Netherlands because of foot-and-mouth disease, hog cholera and swine vesicular disease. Other countries on the African swine fever list include all nations on the African continent, Brazil, Belgium, Cuba, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain.

POULTRY WITH BRITISH ACCENTS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has proposed adding Great Britain to the list of countries eligible to export poultry products to the United States. The inspection system in Britain has met all the required standards of U.S. inspection. (Send comments until June 9 to FSIS, USDA, Room 3803 So., Washington, D.C. 20250. Or call Dr. Wm. Havlick, 202-447-2644.)

FROM OUR
TELEVISION
SERVICE

BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS...Recent figures from the U.S. Department of Agriculture show that bovine tuberculosis is reappearing in several states around the country. Dr. Ralph Hosker with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Serv. talks about what cattle and dairy producers can do to prevent further spread. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (161)

CHINA'S LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY - I...China is undertaking an effort to improve the variety and quantity of meat, milk and eggs in the nation's diet. USDA economist Francis Tuan examines China's modernization of its livestock sector and what this will mean for the U.S. Vic Powell interviews. (162)

CHINA'S LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY - II...USDA economist Francis Tuan continues his discussion on China's livestock improvement program and how this program will affect U.S. exports to this country. Vic Powell interviews. (163)

LESQUERELLA...USDA research scientist Anson Thompson talks about research work being conducted to study a plant, Lesquerella, that produces a seed crop while growing in very dry areas. Vic Powell interviews. (164)

GROUND WATER...USDA research scientist Robert Bowman describes research work in Arizona to study the recharge rate of ground water. Vic Powell interviews. (165)



FROM OUR RADIO
SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1506...(Weekly 13½ min documentary) In recent years a silent trend has been taking place in American agriculture, the rise of the small farm. On this edition of Agriculture USA, George Holmes talks about the rise with the Director of Small Farm Research at the USDA, Budd Kerr.

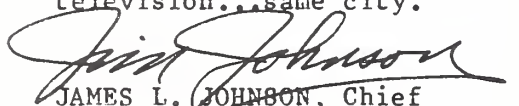
AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1495...(Weekly reel of news features) USDA news highlights; Soviet ag. changes; More on 1986 acreage reduction programs; Branding and dairy cows; Vaccine issue.

CONSUMER TIME #988...(Weekly reel of 2½-3 min features) Oats are good for you; Teen spending; Heart disease and gene defect; Mail order food; Frozen dinners make a comeback.

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE...Mon, Apr. 21, Catfish report, East Asia and Oceania outlook report; Tues, Apr. 22, Weekly weather and crop outlook; Fri, Apr. 26, Vegetables, livestock slaughter report. Dial the USDA National News Line 202-488-8358 or 8359. All material changed at 5 p.m. EST each working day.

OFF MIKE

"Farm 43" is the name of a special project Bruce Lease and his station KWOA in Worthington, Minn. conducted. In a nutshell the "Farm 43" gave away all the input items needed to farm 43 acres. Bruce says an estimated 10,000 entries were received. No info on the winner, but the drawing was held April 5 ... Note the use of "Minn" for Minnesota instead of "MN." This comes as a result of a letter from Bob Cockrum (Texas State Net, Dallas, Tex). He wrote "...to enlist you (me) in my one-man and thus far not-too-successful campaign to get newsletter editors to use standard newspaper abbreviations for states. You see we goofed in designating Washington as WN instead of the proper WA, and this was the straw that broke Bob's back (more or less). So, until we get an overwhelming ground swell of opinions against (or until we goof up and forget) we will use the more traditional state abbreviations from now on ... Speaking of newsletters, the latest we've received is called "The Capcom." It's the monthly newsletter from Capitol Broadcasting Company, Inc., and it contains some rather prominent mentions of Ray Wilkinson and Ken Tanner (WRAL/Tobacco Nets, Raleigh, NC) ... Big congratulations are in order for John Stearns and his AG USA weekly television program. It's celebrating its 25th anniversary. And John reports the program just received its 401st award...from the Freedoms Foundation for Excellence in Electronic Communication. Nice going, John ... Our Gary Crawford received an interesting letter the other day from a Sara Webb, Dallas, Tex. She wanted more information on a story Gary had done about an all-wood office building. And she went on to say she appreciates he reports because of the "...sound effects and funny things that get me going in the morning. And at that time of morning, I need all the help I can get." Amen to that ... Karr Ingham is no longer with KGNC, Amarillo, Tex. He switched to television...same city.


 JAMES L. JOHNSON, Chief
 Radio and Television Division



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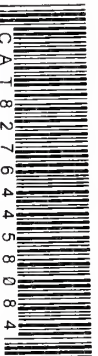
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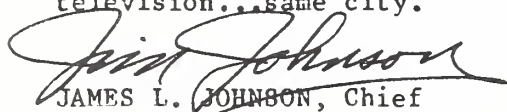


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